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ABSTRACT

A study examined sentence production errors and syntactic complexity in students' writing in two modes of discourse and at three grade levels. Subjects, average and high developmental students enrolled in seventh, ninth, and eleventh grade classes, each wrote two compositions, one in the descriptive the other in the persuasive mode. Data analysis consisted of two parts, first a study of the relationship among syntactic maturity, grade level, sentence error rate, and developmental level within grade level; then a descriptive error analysis of two types of sentence production errors--sentence fragments and run-on sentences. Among the many results of the analysis were the following: (1) a positive relationship existed between composition length and age and student ability; (2) mode of discourse had an effect on syntactic complexity and length of composition, as well as on the number of run-on sentences; (3) the oldest students and students in higher within-grade groups made fewer sentence errors; (4) developmental differences between high and average groups were present in error rates and length of compositions; and (5) the relationship between a sentence fragment and an accompanying sentence was usually between the fragment and a preceding sentence. (FL)

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A DEVELOPMENTAL ANALYSIS OF SENTENCE PRODUCTION ERRORS IN THE WRITING OF SECONDARY STUDENTS

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The problem of this study was to describe sentence production errors and syntactic complexity in students' writing in two modes of discourse and at three grade levels. Although research in developmental writing has much "unexplored territory," one area of writing development, syntactic growth, has been analyzed in some depth. Hunt's (1965) work in identifying the T-unit and proposing that the T-unit increases developmentally in written composition has been supported by other work in developmental writing (Blount et. al., 1968; Braun & Klassen, 1973; Loban, 1976; O'Donnell et al., 1967; Veal, 1974). In addition, the T-unit and Hunt's findings have been used to set norms and measure growth in syntactic development in numerous methodological studies (Maimon & Nodine, 1978; Mellon, 1969; O'Hare, 1973; Stotsky, 1975).

Recently, some researchers have proposed that while measurement of syntactic complexity using the words per T-unit (W/TU) concept may be very useful, situational factors such as mode of discourse also affect complexity in writing. Rosen (1969) found that 15- and 16-year-old students produced longer T-units in referential writing than in expressive writing. San Jose (1973) and Perron (1977), in studies of the writing of

elementary school students, determined that mean T-unit length was greatest in argument or persuasion followed by exposition, narration, and description. Crowhurst and Piche (1979) found that T-unit length was significantly greater in argument than in narration at grades 6 and 10 and also that T-unit length did not increase significantly between grades 6 and 10 in the mode of narration. In order to provide more information about the effect of mode of discourse on syntactic complexity, the present study examined written products, in the modes of persuasion and description, of students in grades 7, 9, and 11.

Another aspect of development in writing, mastery of syntactic error, was not included in Hunt's (1965) analysis. Hunt's stated purposes did not include the study of student's errors. Some researchers have proposed that an analysis of errors in writing could be a promising adjunct to work on syntactic development (Kagan, 1980; Shaughnessy, 1977). These researchers and theorists have begun to use analyses of errors in writing to make inferences about the writing process and how it develops (Barrit & Kroll, 1978; Kagan, 1980; Kroll & Schafer, 1977; Lamb, 1977; Shaughnessy, 1971). They point to valuable work using errors to study growth and learning done in the fields of language acquisition (Berko, 1958; Brown, 1957; Brown & Bellugi, 1964), reading (Goodman, 1969, 1973), and second language acquisition (Burt, 1975; Corder, 1967, 1975a, 1975b; Dulay & Burt, 1972; Richards, 1973, 1974). In the present study two types of sentence errors were described.

Inferences were made about rule-governed language behaviors represented by errors in students' writing.

Some researchers (Barritt & Kroll, 1978; Maimon & Nodine, 1978) have proposed that writing, like other learning processes, is a risk-taking procedure and that syntactic growth may be accompanied by a rise in the occurrence of syntactic errors. Maimon and Nodine (1978) found that development in syntactic skills was associated with a greater incidence of certain types of syntactic errors, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, and faulty parallelism. However, the study by Maimon and Nodine was not a developmental one in the traditional sense. They studied the syntactic development and error rate of college students after the students' participation in a short course on sentence-combining. The present study described relationships between syntactic development and two types of sentence production errors, run-on sentences and sentence fragments, in the writing of secondary school students at three grade levels.

Specifically, the purposes of this study were as follows:

1. To examine differences in syntactic development in the writing of students at three grade levels.

2. To examine the effects of mode of discourse on the syntactic complexity of students' writing at three grade levels.

3. To measure the rate of sentence production errors,

specifically sentence fragments and run-on sentences, in students' writing at three grade levels and in two modes of discourse.

4. To identify and describe sentence production errors, specifically sentence fragments and run-on sentences, and examine developmental error patterns.

5. To identify and describe syntactic structures and logical patterns characteristic of the sentence production errors of student writers at three grade levels.

6. To describe relationships among rate and types of production errors, grade level, mode of discourse, and syntactic complexity.

7. To describe the acquisition of punctuation associated with sentence and clause boundaries.

The research questions which were studied include:

1. What is the effect of mode of discourse on syntactic complexity in writing at three grade levels?

2. What is the rate of syntactic error in writing at three grade levels and in two modes of discourse?

3. Is growth in syntactic complexity associated with changes in rates or types of sentence production errors, specifically run-on sentences and sentence fragments?

4. Are there syntactic structures that characterize students' sentence production errors?

5. Are there logical patterns that characterize students' sentence production errors?

6. Are there relationships among rate and type of sentence production errors, grade level, mode of discourse and syntactic complexity in students' writing?

7. What can be determined about students' acquisition of the use of punctuation associated with sentence and clause boundaries?

8. What can be determined from students' sentence production errors about their concepts of a sentence and its boundaries?

The students whose writing samples provided the data for this study were enrolled in two high schools and one middle school in a large metropolitan school district. A total of 295 students in four 7th-grade classes (95 students), four 9th-grade classes (104 students), and four 11th-grade classes (96 students) each wrote two compositions. This provided 590 writing samples which were analyzed for the purposes of this study. Two of the classes at each grade level were identified as the high developmental group, and two classes at each grade level were identified as the average developmental group.

The writing assignment items used in this study were selected from those developed for the 1973-1974 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The items were administered, before their inclusion in the NAEP, to probability samples, and, in the NAEP itself, to approximately 2,500 students (NAEP, 1980, p. v). The three items used in this study were also used in the Texas Assessment Project

(1978). In the present study the item chosen for descriptive writing was administered to all three grade level groups. Two items were chosen to provide for persuasive writing. The two assignments were used as they were used in the NAEP and in the Texas Assessment Project. In these assessments, the item in which the writer is asked to write to the school principal was administered to 13-year-olds, and the item asking the writer to write for a job was administered to the 17-year-olds. In the present study, the 7th and 9th graders wrote on the school principal items, and the 11th graders wrote on the job letter item.

The data for this study were collected during a 2-month period in the first semester of the school year, 1980-1981. Each group of students wrote in response to the descriptive item and, within 1 week, wrote in response to the persuasive item.

In each administration, the students received copies of the assignment items. They were told to write their compositions on regular notebook paper in ink or pencil. The directions and the writing assignment were read to the students as they read the assignment silently. The additional instructions read to the students encouraged the students to persuade or to describe so that a true demonstration of the students' abilities to write in the two modes would be exhibited. Students were told that no help could be provided by the administrator or their teacher. They were asked to do

their best writing, but were told that the assignment was not a test. Students were allowed one class period, approximately 50 minutes, to complete the task.

The analysis of the data for this study consisted of two parts. The first part was a study of the relationship among syntactic maturity, grade level, sentence error rate, and developmental level within grade level. The second part of the analysis consisted of a descriptive error analysis of two types of sentence production errors, sentence fragments, and run-on sentences.

Since a positive relationship between composition length and development in writing has frequently been noted (Smith, 1980), words in each composition were counted. The mean numbers of words per composition by grade level, developmental level, and mode of discourse were determined. The word counts were done using the criteria developed by O'Hare (1971).

All of the writing samples were segmented into T-units, and mean W/TU was determined for each paper. A T-unit is an independent clause (main clause) plus whatever subordinate clauses or phrases that accompany it. Mean W/TU was determined for each paper. Hunt's (1965, 1977) and Mellon's (1969) instructtons for determining mean W/TU were used.

Two types of sentence errors were chosen for analysis in this study. These two types of errors, sentence fragments and run-on sentences, were chosen for analysis in this study because they are common errors (Kagan, 1980; Shaughnessy, 1977)

and because they probably reflect students' efforts to consolidate T-units.

Run-on sentences and sentence fragments were identified in each paper. The number of errors in each paper was divided by the number of T-units in each paper to arrive at a ratio of run-on sentences per T-unit (S/TU). the ratio of R/TU was determined by counting the number of T-units in run-on sentences rather than just the number of run-on sentences in the paper.

Means and standard deviations were determined for each grade level, each within-grade developmental level, and each mode of discourse for composition length, W/TU, R/TU, and F/TU. To determine the relationships, a 2 x 2 x 3 analysis of variance was done. When a significant f-ratio was obtained, Tukey's multiple comparison test was administered to test for significance between means. Simple correlations between combinations of the four variables also were determined.

The second part of this study consisted of a descriptive error analysis of the sentence fragments and run-on sentences. A total of 473 sentence errors was analyzed in the descriptive analysis. There were 113 run-on sentences in the 7th-graders' papers, 141 in the 9th-graders' apers, and 93 in the 11th-graders' papers, for a total of 347. There were 33 sentence fragments in the 7th-graders' papers, 55 in the 9th-graders' papers, and 37 in the 11th-graders' papers, for a total of 125.

From an analysis of the data and from implications drawn from other research (Daiute, 1981; Kagan, 1980; Lamb, 1977), several anayses of the run-on sentences were made. Daiute (1981) proposed that errors were more likely to come later rather than early in a sentence because errors may be caused by the overloading of short-term memory. To test this hypothesis, the number of words in the first T-unit was counted, and the number of words in each subsequent T-unit was counted. Means for each group were calculated.

Observations were made about syntactic elements, specifically short subseuent T-units descriptive of a word in the first T-unit and beginning with a pronoun. Another observation concerned the changing number of T-units in the run-on sentences at each grade level. Also, the acquisition of the conventions of written English as they apply to sentence boundaries was traced and developmental tendencies discussed.

Run-on sentences were also categorized according to a system proposed by Lamb (1977). In an expcratory error analysis of the writing of college students, Lamb proposed that run-on sentences reflect students' needs to link closely-related ideas. She developed a list of six patterns representing these logical relationships. These patters were used to analyze the run-on sentences in this study. After Lamb's patterns were used to categorize the run-on sentences, seven additional patterns were determined from an analysis of the run-on sentences in this study.

The sentence fragments were categorized according to the syntactic structures used by Kagan (1980) in a sentence fragment test used to provide for an error analysis. A discussion of the ways the sentence fragment could reflect a logical relationship with the sentences around it was presented.

Results

On the measures of writing development, differences in lengths of composition (number of words) were significant, /p/ <.05 between all three grade level combinations, 7 and 9, 9 and 11, and 11 and 7; between the two developmental groups, /p/ < .0001; and between the two modes of discourse, /p/ < .0001. Longer compositions were written by the 11th graders; compositions next in length were written by the 9th graders; and the shortest compositions were written by the 7th graders. longer compositions were written by the students in each high within-grade developmental group. Also, longer compositions were written in the descriptive mode.

In the second measure of writing development, W/TU, there were significant differences, /p/ < .0001 between the two modes of discourse. The mean W/TU wasgreater for persuasive mode. There were no differences among the grade levels. A second analysis of variance was done on the papers in the descriptive

mode only. There was a significant main effect for grade level, /F/ (2, 294) = 48.31, /p/ < .0001. The multiple comparisons tests indicated that there were significant differences between all three grade level combinations, 7 and 9, 9 and 11, and 11 and 7, /p/ < .05. Mean W/TU for the 7th grade was 9.66; for the 9th grade, 11.58; and for the 11th grade, 14.31. Developmental trends like those described by Hunt (1965), 1977), O'Donnell et al. (1967), and Mellon (1969) were present in the compositions written in the descriptive mode but not in those in the persuasive mode.

In the run-on sentence error rate, there were significant differences, /p/ < .0001, between the two modes of discourse, between grades 7 and 11 and 9 and 11, /p/ < .05, and between the two developmental groups, /p/ < .0001. There were more run-on sentences in the descriptive papers, in the seventh- and ninth-graders' papers, and in the average developmental level. There were no differences between run-on sentence error rates in the seventh- and ninth-graders' papers.

In the sentence fragment error rate measurement, there were significant differences, /p/ < .0001, between the two developmental levels with more errors for the average group. There were significant differences, /p/ < .05, between grades 9 and 11 but no differences between grades 7 and 9 and 9 and 11. There were more fragment errors at grade nine than at grade seven. There were no differences between the two modes.

In the descriptive error analysis, it was determined that,

in the papers examined in this study, run-on sentences were more common than sentence fragments. Of the errors, 73.5% were run-on sentences, and 26.48% were sentence fragments. It was also determined that the first T-unit of a run-on sentence is longer than the subsequent T-units, but the difference is not great.

The lengths of the T-units within the run-on sentences were investigated. The means for each grade level were much the same, but the range in numbers of T-units in run-on sentences was greater for the seventh:graders' papers. The range for the 7th graders was 2-12 and for the 11th graders 2-6. Also, the 11th-graders' papers had a smaller percentage of run-on sentences consisting of more than three T-units.

A comparison was made between the mean T-unit length of the run-on sentences and the mean T-unit length for the whole compositions. The mean W/TU in the run-on sentences for each grade level was less than the mean W/TU for the whole compositions. The mean W/TU in the run-on sentences for each grade level was less than the mean W/TU for the whole compositions. The mean W/TU for the whole compositions for the 7th grade was 12.43; for the 9th grade, 13.66; and for the 11th grade, 13.30. The W/TU means of the run-on sentences were 8.78, 9.05, and 9.05, respectively. The level of syntactic complexity for the whole compositions was greater than that for the run-on sentences.

Run-on sentences produced by the 11th graders were different from those of the younger students in this study. The younger students more often simply fused sentences together with no punctuation. The students in the 11th grade in this study made many more comma splices than fused sentences. They seemed to have determined that a sentence, although it might be joined to another, must have some sort of boundary marked by punctuation. The incidence of fused sentences decreased in relation to comma splices between grades 7 and 11, although there was a slight increase in this type in grade 9. The same trends seemed to manifest themselves in within-grade developmental levels. In the high group at each grade level there was a greater incidence of the use of comma splices and a lesser incidence of the use of fused sentences and conjuction/no comma errors.

In an analysis of the run-on sentences themselves and the types of words used in the errors, it was determined that a large percentage of the T-units after the coordination error started with pronouns. Personal pronouns, especially "I" and "it," were most often used.

Hunt (1965) observed that younger writers use more personal pronouns in their writing than older writers do. The use of pronouns to start the second or third T-unit was prevalent in the run-on sentences in this study. To determine whether or not the use of proncuns to begin T-units in run-on sentences was greater than the use of pronouns to begin

correctly punctuated sentences, 360 correctly punctuated sentences were randomly selected from the writing samples, 120 from each grade level.

The percentages of these correctly punctuated sentences which began with pronouns was large at each grade level (grade 7, 65.83%; grade 9, 60.83%; and grade 11, 48.33%). However, these percentages were smaller than those for the use of pronouns to start second or third T-units in run-on sentences (grade 7, 78.24%; grade 9, 70.16%; and grade 11, 77.14%). Also, a decrease in percent at each higher grade level reflected the developmental decrease in use of pronouns noted by Hunt (1965).

Run-on sentences were placed in categories based on six patterns determined from an error analysis by Lamb (1977). Seven extra patterns were determined from an analysis of the data in this study. The most common group consisted of two patterns in which students seemed to be trying to join ideas together in a description. They made ambitious attempts to coordinate or subordinate several ideas but made mistakes in doing so.

A pattern identified by Lamb (1977) as very common in the college students' papers she examined was very rare in the secondary school students' paper examined in this study. There seemed to be different types of run-on sentences related to students' developmental level.

Speech influences in writing were noted in that younger

students became conversational with the audience. Also, younger students interjected opinions and emotional responses like "it was fun," "it was neat," to their writing, thus creating run-on sentences. There were few examples of these interjections in the writing of older students.

The sentence fragments were categorized according to syntactic structures used by Kagan (1980) in an error analysis. She found certain syntactic structures to be important to students in designating a word string as a sentence. In the present study, the two most common types were subordinate clauses (SUB CL) and nouns plus a structure (N + STRUC). These structures attached to nouns were adjectives, adjective (relative) clauses, and prepositional phrases. Although there was a great variety (22) of sentence fragment types, the largest percentages of the errors were of the two common types (grade 7, SUB CL = 24.81%, N + STRUC = 22.22%; grade 11, SUB CL = 11.11%, N + STRUC = 38.89%).

Of the fragments analyzed in this study, only two were related to the following sentence. All others were related to the preceding sentence. Of the two types listed above, N + STRUC was used, as well as other structures (nouns alone, for instance) in apposition to the preceding sentence. Of the 125 fragments, 42 were appositive fragments.

A large number of fragments served an adverbial function for the preceding sentence. These fragments told when, where, how, why, to what extent, and under what conditions. The

subordinate clause fragments beginning with "because" were of this type. There were 47 fragments of this type. Examples from students' compositions of both types, adverbial and appositive, were included.

Conclusions

The conclusions of this study are based on data from writing samples in two modes of discourse and from grades 7, 9, and 11. Within the limitations of this study, the following conclusions have been formulated.

1. As has been noted by other researchers, a positive relationship exists between composition length and age and ability of the student writer. The length of the students' compositions increased at each grade level. Students in the higher within-grade group at each grade level wrote longer compositions than the students in the average group.

2. Mode of discourse does have an effect on syntactic complexity and length of composition. Hunt (1965, 1970, 1977) established norms for measuring syntactic development by grade level. In this study, as in those by Rosen (1969), San Jose (1972), and Perron (1977), mode of discourse significantly affected syntactic maturity as measured by mean W/TU. This study supported the assertion of Crowhurst (1980) that persuasive writing inherently calls for the interrelationship of propositions and that this interrelationship is expressed by

the subordination of clauses and less-than-clausal elements. This subordination has the effect of increasing mean W/TU.

Mode of discourse also affected length of composition. Compositions in the descriptive mode were longer. Students seemed to have more to say in the descriptive mode. However, the length of the compositions may have been affected by the fact that the persuasive items called for letter writing. Perhaps letter writings, especially the official type required by these assignments, calls for more concise writing.

Mode also had an effect on run-on sentence errors. More run-on sentences were present in the compositions in the descriptive mode than in those in the persuasive mode. Of course, the papers in both modes included sentence errors which were not considered in this study. If persuasion does call for more subordination than description does, it follows that descriptive writing would rely more on coordination than persuasive writing would. Coordination errors were the ones measured by this analysis of run-on sentence errors. An error analysis directed toward errors in subordination might discover more errors in the persuasive mode.

3. Syntactic maturity as measured by mean W/TU is not always a reliable index of growth if mode is not considered. In this study, the findings of Hunt (1965, 1970, 1977), O'Donnel et al. (1967), and Mellon (1969) about development in mean W/TU were supported by data from the descriptive mode but not from the persuasive mode. Scores in mean W/TU in the

persuasive mode were higher than those in the descriptive mode at grades 7 and 9 and lower at grade 11. The persuasive scores were much the same at all grade levels. The drop in the 11th-grade persuasive mean W/TU score was probably affected by the assignment item. The 11th-grade item elicited a more explanatory type of writing than the clearly persuasive items used in the 7th and 9th grades. Also, the mean W/TU for the 7th-graders' compositions was almost as high as the mean W/TU for the 9th-graders' compositions. Perhaps, when the situation calls for syntactic complexity, younger writers can produce it.

4. The oldest students and students in the higher within-grade group made fewer sentence errors. Students demonstrated developmnental tendencies in mastery of the "print code." Differences were not great between grades seven and nine. In fact, fragment rate increased in the ninth grade. Both types of errors dropped of dramatically in the 11th:graders' compositions.

5. Developmental differences between high and average groups are present in error rates and length of compositions. The studentns in the high group produced more words and fewer errors in their compositions. They also produced more W/TU in the descriptive mode than the average group.

6. Two syntactic structures, subordinate clauses and noun plus a structure (relative clauses, prepositional phrases, adjuectives) characterize students' sentence fragments. These types were found across grade levels and modes although the

subordinate clause was most common in the ninth-graders' compositions.

7. A wide variety of syntactic structures are used in the run-on sentences, but a common element of a large number of the run-on sentences is a second or third T-unit beginning with a personal pronoun, most commonly "it" or "I."

8. Students' run-on sentences and fragments seem to reflect developing syntactic skills. Hunt (1965) described the junior high school years (grades seven through nine) as a time when students are trying out new syntactic abilities. The errors of the students in this study reflected attempts of the students to coordinate within the T-unit (verbs and objects especially), subordinate, and use appositives. Writing does seem to be a risk-taking activity, in which ambitious attempts to use developing syntactic abilities may result in errors.

9. Logical patterns can be found in the run-on sentence errors of secondary-school students, although these patterns may not account for all errors. In the compositions examined in this study, the fused sentences or comma splices often expressed relationships between or among the T-units in the run-on sentences. The relationship was often causal with the implied ideas of "because" or "therefore." Younger students' run-on sentences were often characterized by interjections of statements of opinion or emotion such as, "it was fun," or, "it was neat,"or by conversational summaries like "well that's all I know."

10. The relationship between a sentence fragment and an accompanying sentence is usually between the fragment and a preceding sentence. In the 125 fragments examined in this study, only 2 were characterized by a logical relationship with the following sentence.

11. Students with a higher level of writing development are more likely, when producing a run-on sentence, to use a comma splice than a fused sentence. This tendency was noted in the 11th-graders' compositions and in the compositions of the high developmental group at each grade level. These students seem to have acquired the concept that the sentence must be set apart by some sort of punctuation. From this viewpoint, the comma splice can be seen as evidence of growth.

12. Error sentences may be less syntactically complex than the whole compositions. In this study, students produced more syntactically complex sentences in their whole compositions than they did in the run-on sentences. Often the run-on sentences were characterized by short sentences beginning with pronouns. Hunt (1965) noted that young writers may use more pronouns in order to sustain ideas across T-units since these young writers use more T-unitsd to express their ideas. More mature writers use fewer T-units and thus do not need the references necessary to sustain ideas across multiple T-units. The run-on sentences included may short T-units beginning with pronouns. Maimon and Nodine (1979) proposed that a higher incidence of errors might be associated with greater syntactic

maturity as measured by W/TU. The findings of the present study did not support this assertion in that error sentences were less mature than the other writing demonstrated by students.

Implications

The following implications are based on the results of this study.

1. Errors in writing do reflect rules and strategies that developing writers used while engaging in the composing task. Errors should not be ignored in student writing but used for study by the teacher, researcher, and students. Students try to "make sense" of the complicated act of composing by applying rules that seem appropriate to them. Shaughnessy (1977) observed that students often have very good reasons for the errors they make. A helpful attitude toward errors in writing is one in which errors are viewed as clues to the rules the student uses while composing. Perl (1979) showed that poor writers are often unable to move forward in composing because

of a fear of errors. Techniques could be developed which would help students use their own errors as a means for growth in writing. Observaions in this study indicate that some errors, comma splices for instance, actually do indicate growth. These are still errors but may reflect students' accommodation of what is needed to communicate in the "print code."

2. The purposes people have when they compose probably affect the most basic decisions they make while composing. In this study purpose or mode affected even such a basic element as syntactic choice. Purpose probably affects other choices in writing. Much of the instruction and research in writing has assumed that "good" writing is the same in all circumstances. Recently theorists have proosed that the choices made in writing are based upon what one hopes to achieve through a particular piece of writing. This study included no discussion of the concern for intended audience. This important factor should be explored along with considerations of purpose in writing.

4. Run-on sentences seemed to occur when students repeated subjects or other sentence elements in order to sustain ideas across T-units. The errors of the students in this study reflected attempts by the students to coordinate within T-units (verbs and objects especially), and subordinate, and use appositives. Also, the syntactic complexity of the error sentences as measured by W/TU was less than the syntactic complexity of the whole compositions. Development in methods

to consolidate T-units to create fewer, longer T-units may help students in that they do not have to sustain ideas across so many T-units. Sentence-combining (Mellon, 1969; O'Hare, 1973; Strong, 1973) may be a useful technique in helping students develop syntactic fluency,and this fluency in ways to effectively combine types of syntactic structures may lead to a decline in syntactic error.

5. Good writing by adults is characterized by conciseness and clarity. Sometimes the demand for conciseness is conveyed to young writers. This study indicates that verbal skill in young writers is often demonstrated by the use of a large number of words. Perhaps, although conciseness might be the ultimate goal, young writers should not be discouraged in their wordiness.

Suggestions for Further Research

Based upon the results of this study, the following suggestions are made for further research. 1. Studies of syntactic development or complexity should include mode of discourse as a variable. 2. Error analysis is a promising research tool in studying the development of writing abilities. A promising area is the study of the syntactic errors committed by students when they attempt to subordinate. 3. Further research should study what actually takes place when people write in different modes or for different purposes.

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